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More livestock are eating out of a smaller feed concentrate supply in 1951-52.

December crop production estimates indicate that supplies of feed concentrates for the October, 1951-September, 1952 feeding year total 170 million tons, 5 percent less than in 1950-51. But there are about 2 percent more grain-consuming animal units to be fed.

Production of corn, oats, barley and sorghum grain in 1951 was 114 million tons, 7 percent less than in 1950. Stocks carried over from previous crops, plus expected imports, brings the total supply to 144 million. Feeding this year is expected to exceed production 10 to 11 million tons. In 1950-51, about 2 million tons more were fed than produced.

Situation is better for other concentrates. About the same quantity of byproduct feeds are expected as in 1950-51—about 21.6 million tons. This will include a record quantity of oilseed cake and meal, about the same amount of animal protein feeds and a little less of other byproduct feeds. Feeding of wheat, rye and imported grains is expected to be up from 4.4 million tons to 6 million.

With consumption again exceeding production, stocks of feed grains at the end of 1951-52 will be lower than is needed to assure stable livestock production. Because of this situation, USDA production goals for 1952 call for about 9 million more acres in the 4 feed grains than last year.

The rise in prices of feed concentrates this fall and winter has reflected the generally strong demand and smaller supplies. Feed shortages in drought areas of the southwest and smaller marketings of good quality corn also have helped boost prices. Prices of feed grains in mid-December averaged 16 percent higher than year earlier.

PRICES Prices farmers receive moved up about 1 percent from mid-November to mid-December. Chief gainers were truck crops and other vegetables, dairy products, feed and hay. Declines were registered by meat animals, eggs and cotton.

Prices farmers pay including interest, taxes and wage rates remained at the record level of mid-November. As a result, the rise in prices received raised the parity ratio from 106 to 107.

Wholesale prices in recent weeks have been steady at about 4 percent below the peak of last March. Costs of living, on the farm and in the city, are at record levels.

ECONOMIC ACTIVITY Business picked up a little in the last quarter of 1951, preliminary estimates indicate. Sales in retail stores in October and November were above the monthly average of the third quarter. Declines in retailers inventories brought them closer to a normal relationship to sales. Non-farm employment was up, manufacturers' new orders and shipments rose and business spending for new plant and equipment increased.

LIVESTOCK AND MEAT Hog production is expected to turn downward in 1952 for the first time in 5 years. The December report of farmers' intentions indicate that 9 percent fewer pigs will be raised in the spring of 1952 than last year. However, the pig crop still would be 2 percent larger than the 10-year average.

During 1951, 102,139,000 pigs were raised, a spring pig crop of 61,957,000 head and a fall crop of 40,182,000. The total was 5 percent more than in 1950, 12 percent more than the 10-year average. The spring crop was 7 percent larger than in 1950, the fall crop was up only 2 percent.

Most of the pork produced in 1952 will come from the 1951 fall crop and the 1952 spring crop. Pork production will stay above the level of a year ago in early 1952 but beginning about late summer, supplies will fall considerably below the corresponding 1951 level. Production for the year will be a little smaller than in 1952.

The trend in production of beef will be in opposite direction. By late 1952 beef production may be considerably larger than in same period of 1951.

DAIRY PRODUCTS Prices of several dairy products moved up in the last month. Demand has been strong, storage stocks have been declining and milk production has been running below a year ago. Butter prices advanced more than those of other products in the late months of 1951, rising more than seasonally.

POULTRY AND EGGS Egg prices are expected to continue to decline seasonally to levels below those of last spring. Production this spring is expected to be about 4 percent larger than a year ago.

Storage holdings of frozen chicken are near the season peak and probably above last year. Relatively low prices have encouraged storage.

FATS AND OILS Output of fats and oils from domestic materials is expected to total a record 12.6 billion pounds in 1951-52. Last year's output was 12.3 billion, also a record. Less soybean and linseed oils and butter is expected but output of cottonseed oil, lard and inedible tallow and grease will be up.

WHEAT Large U. S. exports and poor harvesting conditions in exporting countries have contributed strength to the U. S. wheat market in recent months. In mid-December, farmers' prices for wheat averaged \$2.22, 91 percent of parity and 4 cents above the national average loan rate.

FRUIT Declining prices for oranges and grapefruit are in prospect as harvesting continues seasonally large. In December, oranges and grapefruit prices were well below a year earlier.

The early and mid-season orange crop was estimated at 56,125,000 boxes in December, compared with 54,160,000 in the 1950-51 season. Grapefruit production, on the other hand, was down—from 46,580,000 boxes to 40,690,000.

VEGETABLES Winter production of cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, escarole and lettuce is expected to be below last winter and prices probably will be higher. On the other hand, higher production and lower prices is the outlook for artichokes, shallots and spinach.

Potato prices are expected to advance about seasonally in the next few months. Sweetpotatoes probably will continue high because of small supplies.

Farmers' prices for potatoes rose 19 cents a bushel to \$1.93 in mid-December and were 5 percent above parity. A year earlier, they were selling at 51 percent below parity. Sweetpotato prices also were above parity—18 percent.

COTTON Disappearance of cotton in August-November was a little larger than a year earlier, because of a sharp gain in exports. Consumption by U. S. mills was smaller. Cotton prices to farmers declined slightly from mid-November to mid-December; at 40.34 cents they were 18 percent above parity.

The cotton supply for 1951-52 is now estimated at 17.7 million running bales, slightly more than a year earlier.

WOOL About 12 percent less apparel wool was consumed in the U. S. mills in the first 10 months of 1951 than in the same period of 1950, even though military takings of wool goods were large. Consumption of carpet wool—all of which is imported—was down about 47 percent.

TOBACCO Demand for burley sold before the holidays was fairly strong. Prices through December 21 averaged 52.8 cents, 9 percent more than in the pre-holiday period a year earlier. Auction prices for dark-air-cured types 35-36 during the first half of December also were above a year earlier.

